



# ***St Francis of Assisi***

## ***Parish Newsletter***

*".....we can celebrate the most beautiful Christmas ever. In one of your woods, in Greccio, there is a cave similar to that of Bethlehem. I would like to represent the Christmas scene and see with our eyes, the poverty in which the Child Jesus came into the world. I want to see how he was placed in a crib and lay there between the ox and the donkey".*  
**St Francis of Assisi.**



### **ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI**

**Grove Crescent Road, Stratford, London, E15 1BJ**

**SUNDAY CYCLE: B (MARK)**

**WEEKDAYS CYCLE: II**



### **11<sup>th</sup> February 2024 – 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time**

#### **World Day of Prayer for the Sick.**

We cannot work miracles, but the miracles of Jesus are there to teach us something about what we **can** do. The meaning of a miracle is in what Jesus says, when asked by the leper to heal him. Jesus says, "I want to". The compassion of Jesus is the reason why we know our sins **can** be forgiven.

#### **Today's Reading**

**Leviticus 13:1-2. 44-46:** There are always people who are excluded, but Christ is the great uniter.

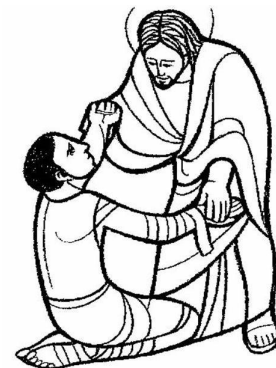
**Response to the Psalm: Let your love come to me and I shall live.**

**1 Corinthians 10:31 – 11:1:** There is no action too trivial to offer to the glory of God.

**Mark 1:40-45:** The harshness of the law excluding lepers prepares the way for the mercy of Christ.

#### **"I want to"**

At the time of Jesus, leprosy was not simply modern Hansen's disease, but any number of skin diseases, mostly temporary conditions that were usually not fatal. Any kind of Leprosy was seen as punishment for sins. It was thought that people with leprosy could contaminate other people, so they were excluded from the community for the good of everyone. Quarantined from healthy members of society, lepers were forced to live apart from family, friends, and the community. Today we see how one such leper dared to approach Jesus and humbly beg to be healed. Jesus was filled with compassion, and he touched the man even though contact with leprosy made a person "unclean." Then Jesus sent the man to the Jewish priest who alone could pronounce him cured. Jesus was concerned that his miracles might be misinterpreted as wonder-working, so he admonished the man not to speak about the healing. But the man could not restrain himself and proclaimed the good news to everyone. Now it was Jesus who was forced to live on the outskirts of town.



**WEDNESDAY 14<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2025 – ASH WEDNESDAY – MASSES AT 12:15PM AND 7:30PM**

**EVERY FRIDAY DURING LENT – STATIONS OF THE CROSS – 7:00PM.**

**SATURDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2024 – VALENTINES DAY DANCE – LARAGE HALL – DETAILS AT THE BACK OF THE CHURCH.**

**SUNDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2024 – FIRST HOLY COMMUNION CANDIDATES, PARENTS & GUARDIANS – 2PM IN THE CHURCH.**

**FRIDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> FEBRUARY 2024 – CAFOD FAMILY FAST DAY.**

**SATURDAY 23<sup>RD</sup> MARCH 2024 – STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN THE OLYMPIC PARK**

**SUNDAY 7<sup>TH</sup> APRIL – FRIDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024 – DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD PILGRIMAGE TO KNOCK – SEE POSTER AT THE BACK OF THE CHURCH.**

**SATURDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024 – PILGRIMAGE TO WALSINGHAM – DETAILS TO FOLLOW.**

Pray for those who have died, and those whose Anniversaries occur around this time, also, please pray for the sick, and, remember the People of Ukraine. We also pray for peace in the Holy Land.



## WORLD DAY OF THE SICK

Pope John Paul II initiated this day in 1992 to encourage people to pray for everyone who suffers from illness and for their carers. The Pope himself had been

diagnosed with Parkinson's a year before, in 1991, and it is thought that his own illness may have been an impetus for his designation of this day of prayer. People around the world take the time to pray for the sick and for all those who work very hard to alleviate their sufferings. Faith organizations mark this day especially to provide the sick with medicines, food, and spiritual guidance. Pray today for Doctors, Nurses, and all those who provide care, as well as for the sick.

## ASH WEDNESDAY 14 February Day of Fast and Abstinence



**"Take care not to perform righteous deeds in order that people may see them; otherwise, you will have no recompense from your heavenly Father".**

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus asked his disciples to examine their **motives** when performing virtuous deeds. He gave three examples, which were characteristic of Jewish piety at the time: **almsgiving, prayer, and fasting.** Jesus contrasted the hypocritical behaviour of the religious leaders with the sincere conduct he expected from his followers. **Prayer** should express the disciple's relationship with God. **Almsgiving** should convey their solidarity with the poor. **Fasting** should represent their sorrow for sin. The prophets warned against outward signs without interior conversion. The prophet Joel said: "Rend your hearts, not your garments, and return to the Lord". Fasting had no value if it was only done to win the approval of other people. The prophet Isaiah said that an acceptable fast should include acts of justice toward the prisoner, the poor, the hungry, the oppressed, and the homeless. Today, the placing of ashes on our foreheads is an admission of our sinfulness, but also a sign of hope and trust in a merciful God who is rich in kindness and relenting in punishment

## LENT: LENTEN REGULATIONS

The Season of Lent is a Catholic liturgical season consisting of forty days beginning on Ash Wednesday and concluding at sunset on Holy Thursday. It is a time for the celebration of Easter. The official liturgical colour is purple or violet. Throughout history, Jews and Christians have found **prayer, fasting, and almsgiving** to be an important part of repentance and renewal. Rather than giving up something, a lot of Catholics address the thing in their own personal conduct that needs to be changed or they perform some outreach to other people in need. **Ash Wednesday and Good Friday** are obligatory days of universal fasting and abstinence. **Fasting** allows a person to eat one full meal a day; Two smaller meals count as one full meal.. **Abstinence** (from meat) is required of everyone who has reached their 14th year. It is mandatory for everyone over 18 and under 60. Drinking ordinary liquids does not break the fast. Traditionally, the ashes used for Ash Wednesday come from burning the Palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday. Ashes are a biblical symbol of mourning and penance used since the time of Moses ("sackcloth and ashes," Nm 19:9-10, 17-18). They also symbolize death and so remind us of our mortality. Thus, when the priest signs you with the ashes, he says, either **"Remember! You are dust and to dust you shall return."** Or, as a reminder of the joy of eternal life: **"Repent and believe the good news!"** Ashes remind us of the Day of Judgment when we stand before God. To prepare well for that day, we must die now to sin so that we can rise to new life in Christ Being marked with ashes at the beginning of Lent indicates our need for deeper conversion of our lives during this season of renewal.



Grove Crescent Rd, Stratford, E15 1BJ

### Masses

**Monday to Friday** 12:15. **Tuesday**, after Mass, St Anthony Novena.  
**Saturday:** Morning Prayer: 9:40am Mass 10am followed by Holy Hour Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until 11:30am.

**Confession: Saturday:** 10:30am - 11:30am & 5pm - 5:45pm

**Sunday:** 6pm Saturday, 9am, 10:15am, 12 noon & 4:30pm (Ukrainian).

Fr Michael O'Grady, OFM (Parish Priest)

Fr Brian McGrath, OFM

Fr Yusuf Bagh, OFM

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